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# Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 09191 201011Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00
HA-05 ACDA-12 /094 W
----------113036 201016Z /14
O 200934Z JUL 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4303
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NY
USMISSION SINAI

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LONDON FOR AMBASSADOR LEWIS

E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT IS
SUBJ: A REVITALIZED BEGIN ON EXHIBIT AT KNESSET

1. SUMMARY: THE KNESSET WAS WITNESS YESTERDAY TO A RE-
MARKABLE PERFORMANCE BY PRIME MINISTER BEGIN. IN SHARP
CONTRAST TO RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS OF FRAILTY AND FAILING
HEALTH, BEGIN ENERGETICALLY DEFENDED HIS GOVERNMENT AND
ATTACKED THE LABOR OPPOSITION IN A FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 09191 201011Z

WHICH WILL BE RESUMED EARLY NEXT WEEK. END SUMMARY

2. A ROUTINE MOTION FOR THE AGENDA YESTERDAY (JULY 19)
TURNED INTO A RAUCUS KNESSET FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE IN WHICH
THE FINER POINTS OF BOTH PARLIAMENTARY ETIQUETTE AND THE
PEACE PROCESS WERE LOST AMID PARTISAN RHETORIC AND
HECKLING.

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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3. THE CHARGED ATMOSPHERE IN THE KNESSET WAS DUE IN LARGE PART TO THE EXPECTATION OF AN EXTENDED (PROJECTED DAY-LONG) SECOND
READING OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE NATIONAL SERVICE LAW, EASING CRITERIA FOR ARMY EXEMPTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS WOMEN. IT WAS HEIGHTENED WHEN SHIMON PERES DECIDED, ONLY HOURS AFTER HIS RETURN FROM EUROPE THE NIGHT OF JULY 18 (VIA MOROCCO, ACCORDING TO AN INFORMED
LABOR PARTY CONTACT) TO PRESENT A MOTION TO THE AGENDA REQUESTING A FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE. IN HIS REMARKS, PERES VIGOROUSLY ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT'S PEACE PLAN AND NEGOTIATING STRATEGY, AND CHARGED THE PM WITH CONTEMPTUOUS DENIAL OF THE KNESSET'S RIGHT TO BE INFORMED.

4. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN RESPONDED WITH A REMARKABLE DISPLAY OF VITALITY WHICH OBSERVERS VARIOUSLY TERMED "MANIC" OR "IMPRESSIVE," DEPENDING ON POLITICAL AFFILIATION. BEGIN ALTERNATELY DEFENDED THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT POSITION, LASHED OUT AT HECKLERS, STUBBORNLY MISINTERPRETED THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PERES-SADAT TALKS, AND SARCASTICALLY DENEGRATED SADAT AND KREISKY. PERES DENOUNCED THE PRIME MINISTER'S "PROVOCATIONS," AND THE SESSION RAPIDLY DETERIORATED INTO A SHOUTING MATCH WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER APPEARED TO RELISH AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXHIBIT HIS OLD FLAIR FOR SHOWMANSHIP AND VERBAL PARRYING. BEGIN ULTIMATELY AGREED TO A FULL-SCALE FOREIGN POLICY DE-
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BATE NEXT WEEK, FOLLOWING SUNDAY'S CABINET SESSION.

5. THE SESSION WAS NOTEWORTHY IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S REMARKABLE PERFORMANCE, THE LIKES OF WHICH THE KNESSET HAS NOT BEEN WITNESS TO IN MANY MONTHS. ONLY THREE DAYS PREVIOUSLY, AT THE MEETING OF THE HERUT CENTER, BEGIN FELT CALLED UPON TO PROCLAIM TO THE TELEVISION CAMERAS "I AM HEALTHY." IN HIS KNESSET APPEARANCE, ON THE OTHER HAND, BEGIN GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF SOMEONE ENTHUSIASTICALLY ACTING OUT THE VERACITY OF THIS CLAIM.

6. SOME OBSERVERS FOUND THE CONTRAST UNCOMFORTABLY SHARP, AND CAUSTICALLY REFERRED TO A NEW "MANIC" BEGIN WHOSE LACK OF SELF-CONTROL HARDLY BEFIT A DISCUSSION OF SO SERIOUS A SUBJECT. PARTICULARLY GALLING TO ALIGNMENT MKS WAS BEGIN'S INSISTENCE ON CHARACTERIZING THE SUBSTANCE OF THE VIENNA TALKS WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF A REPORT FROM PERES ON HIS SESSION WITH SADAT. BEGIN'S WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE PERES ONLY AFTER THE SESSION AND HIS CHOICE OF VENUE FOR THE MEETING (THE PACKED KNESSET CAFETERIA) WAS INTERPRETED BY BOTH LABOR MKS AND KNESSET REPORTERS AS A CONSCIOUSLY INTENDED DEMONSTRATION OF CONTEMPT FOR PERES' NEGOTIATING FORAY.

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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LIKUD MKS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE RETURN OF THE VIGOROUS BEGIN. MK LINN (LA'AM), IN A TANTALIZING ASIDE, EXPLAINED THAT THIS SUDDEN INCREASE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S ENERGY LEVEL IS THE RESULT OF A RECENT CHANGE IN MEDICATION: "WE HAVE A NEW PRIME MINISTER," HE GLOWED, "AND ALL THE WORLD MUST KNOW." VIETS

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# Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960
**Decaption Note:**
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED
**Disposition Approved on Date:**
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014
**Disposition Event:**
**Disposition History:** n/a
**Disposition Reason:**
**Disposition Remarks:**
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**Enclosure:** n/a
**Executive Order:** N/A
**Errors:** N/A
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a
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**Status:** NATIVE
**Subject:** A REVITALIZED BEGIN ON EXHIBIT AT KNESSET
**TAGS:** PINT, IS, (BEGIN, MENACHEM)
**To:** STATE
**Type:** TE
**vdkvgwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a94da66f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
**Review Markings:**
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20 Mar 2014
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